



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Announces First Enforcement Crackdown Campaign on Distracted Driving
Pilot Programs in Hartford, CT and Syracuse, NY are Latest Effort in DOT's Fight Against Distracted Driving

WASHINGTON, D.C. - As part of its continuing effort to combat distracted driving, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) is kicking off pilot programs in Hartford, Connecticut and Syracuse, New York to test whether increased law enforcement efforts can get distracted drivers to put down their cell phones and focus on the road.

The pilot programs, which are similar to previous efforts to curb drunk driving and increase seat belt use among drivers, are the first federally funded efforts in the country to specifically focus on the effects of increased enforcement and public advertising on reducing distracted driving. Drivers caught texting or talking on a hand-held cell phone will be pulled over and ticketed. The message is simple, "Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other."

"Law enforcement will be out on the roads in Syracuse, NY, and Hartford, CT, with one simple message, if a driver is caught with a cell phone in one hand, they'll end up with a ticket in the other," said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "It's time for drivers to act responsibly, put their hands on the wheel and focus on the road."

High visibility enforcement will begin in the Syracuse metropolitan area from April 8 through 17, while the crackdown in the Hartford metropolitan area will begin on April 10 through 16. Subsequent enforcement waves in both states will take place throughout the course of the year-long program.

The program will be also be supported by a paid advertising campaign that focuses on men and women up to the age of 49 and will air April 1 through April 16 in the Hartford and Syracuse metropolitan areas.

Each pilot program is supported by \$200,000 in federal funds and matched by \$100,000 from the state. Researchers will study changes in attitudes and behavior from beginning to end and the results will serve as a model for employing high visibility enforcement, education and outreach to reduce distracted driving behaviors in other cities and states across the country.

"There is no question that high-visibility enforcement combined with effective public advertising works. We've seen the results first-hand with national campaigns like Click It or Ticket and Drunk Driving. Over The Limit. Under Arrest," said NHTSA Administrator David Strickland. "Distracted driving is a growing problem—the numbers tell the story of these preventable tragedies."

Research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shows that in 2008 alone, nearly 6,000 people were killed and more than a half million people were injured in crashes involving a distracted driver nationwide. Almost 20 percent of all crashes that same year involved some type of distraction.

Nationwide, six states prohibit all drivers from using hand-held cell phones while driving and twenty-one states have enacted texting bans.

To learn more visit www.distraction.gov

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